

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 11-14, 21, 25, 28 and 29 have been amended herein. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as amended. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-9 (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) A method of removing oxide polymer and metal polymer from a contact opening in a dielectric layer having an underlying metal-containing layer on a semiconductor substrate, the method comprising applying a solution consisting essentially of a nitric acid solution on the contact opening followed by a phosphoric acid solution dip.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising ~~performing~~ applying the nitric acid solution ~~dip~~ at a concentration of between about 50% and 100% by weight.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the nitric acid solution ~~dip~~ for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 30 minutes.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising applying the nitric acid solution ~~dip~~ in a time span of about 200 seconds.

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the nitric acid solution ~~dip~~ at a temperature of between about 10° and 80°C.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising performing the phosphoric acid solution dip at a concentration of between about 200 volumes of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid and about 1 volume of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the phosphoric acid solution dip at a temperature of between about 10° and 80°C.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the phosphoric acid solution dip for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 10 minutes.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the phosphoric acid solution dip further includes a fluorine-containing component.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes hydrofluoric acid.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes ammonium fluoride.

21. (Currently amended) A method of fabricating a via in a dielectric layer and an underlying barrier layer for a semiconductor device, comprising:
forming a partial via in the dielectric layer to expose at least portion of the barrier layer;
cleaning the partial via with a phosphoric acid-containing solution;
etching the barrier layer after the cleaning to form a full via having a metal containing trace on a bottom surface thereof; and
applying a ~~nitric acid~~nitric acid-containing solution to the full via.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution at a concentration of between about 50% and 100% by weight.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 30 minutes.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution in a time span of about 200 seconds.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising applying the ~~nitric acid-containing~~ nitric acid-containing solution at a temperature of between about 10° and 80°C.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising cleaning the partial via with the phosphoric acid -containing solution at a concentration of between about 200 volumes of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid and about 1 volume of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising cleaning the partial via with the phosphoric acid-containing solution at a temperature of between about 10° and 80°C.

28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising cleaning the partial via with the phosphoric acid ~~-containing~~ acid-containing solution for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 10 minutes.

29. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the phosphoric acid ~~-containing~~ acid-containing solution further includes a fluorine-containing component.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes hydrofluoric acid.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes ammonium fluoride.